

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for securely distributing a component from a network host to a
5 network appliance, comprising the steps of:
 signing, by said network host, a configuration file including a load table
 which defines a plurality of authorized components for said network appliance;
 executing a secure kernel and said signed configuration file on said
network appliance, said secure kernel including computer code for checking the
10 authenticity of said configuration file;
 verifying, by said secure kernel, the authenticity of said configuration
file;
 reading, by said secure kernel, said load table only after said verifying
step; and
15 loading said plurality of authorized components onto said network
appliance.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said loading step comprises loading an
operating system.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said loading step comprises loading a
20 computer software application.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein said loading step comprises loading
services.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
 generating, by said host, an updated configuration file;
25 signing, by said host, said updated configuration file;
 transmitting said signed updated configuration file from said host to said
network appliance;
 verifying, by said secure kernel, the authenticity of said updated
configuration file; and
30 thereafter reading, by said secure kernel, said updated configuration file.